

Family: Vet at WH needs help

By BETSY BLANEY and JOSH LEDERMAN
Associated Press

MIDLAND, Texas — An Iraq war veteran accused of scaling a fence and making it into the White House before the Secret Service stopped him posed no threat to anyone and needs counseling instead of prosecution, members of his family said Sunday.

Omar Gonzalez, 42, was arrested Friday and is expected in federal court Monday to face charges of unlawfully entering a restricted building or grounds while carrying a deadly or dangerous weapon — a small folding knife in this case.

Jerry Murphy, whose mother was married to Gonzalez for several years, said Gonzalez suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and that he needs treatment. He said Gonzalez has been driving around the country and living out of his truck for the past couple of years, and that he always carries his knife.

"I know he's got heavy artillery, you know?" Murphy added. "He's got all kinds of weapons and he was trained to use them. I believe if he wanted to make a scene or cause problems, he very well could have. But it's clear that he didn't."

The Secret Service has come under heavy criticism since the embarrassing security breach, which happened when the first family wasn't at the White House. Secret Service Director Julia Pierson ordered increased surveillance and more officer patrols at the White House, as the agency investigates what went wrong.

The Army said Gonzalez enlisted in July 1997 and remained until completing his service obligation in September 2003. He reenlisted in July 2005 and served until



A photo provided by Jerry Murphy shows Omar Gonzalez on Sept. 21, 2009. Gonzalez was married to Murphy's mother, Samantha, until they divorced in 2012. Authorities have identified Gonzalez as the man who got into the White House after scaling a fence on Friday. (Associated Press)

CHECKPOINTS AROUND WH POSSIBLE

NEW YORK (AP) — A law enforcement official says the U.S. Secret Service is having preliminary discussions about setting up security screening checkpoints near public areas around the White House.

The official said the measures have been discussed by the agency previously. But the talks have taken on added urgency following an incident Friday in which a man jumped over a gate around the White House and made it to a building entrance.

The official insisted on anonymity because the official was not authorized to discuss internal deliberations by name.

his retirement in late 2012, serving in Iraq from October 2006 to January 2008.

The military does not provide details about a soldier's disability because of privacy considerations. But Samantha Bell, who is Gonzalez's ex-wife and Murphy's mother, said Gonzalez was honorably discharged for medical reasons and suffered from plantar fasciitis on his feet, on which he had had some surgeries. She said he also suffered from PTSD, for which he had been prescribed several medications.

'Cry for help'

Bell said she and Gonzalez married in 2006 and lived together in Copperas Cove, near Fort Hood, until she split up with him in 2010 because of his worsening mental condition. After his second tour in Iraq, Gonzalez began carrying a .45 on his hip at all times and kept

three or four rifles and shotguns behind the doors in their home, said Bell, who remarried and now lives in southern Indiana.

She said Gonzalez kept the blinds drawn and would repeatedly go downstairs during the night to make sure the doors were locked and the oven was off. She said she once woke up in the middle of the night to find Gonzalez standing at the foot of the bed and staring at her. She said he told her he was simply watching her sleep.

"Omar is a good guy; he's just got some issues that he needs help with," she said. "I think this is a cry out for help, what he's done."

Bell said she had never heard Gonzalez speak about the "falling atmosphere" that a criminal complaint says Gonzalez wanted to warn the president about.

Ebola lockdown comes to an end

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone (AP) — Frustrated residents complained of food shortages in some neighborhoods of Sierra Leone's capital on Sunday as the country reached the third and final day of a sweeping, unprecedented lockdown designed to combat the deadly Ebola disease, volunteers said.

While most residents welcomed teams of health care workers and volunteers bearing information about the disease, rumors persisted in pockets of the city that poisoned soap was being distributed, suggesting that public education campaigns had not been entirely successful.

The streets of the capital, Freetown, were again mostly deserted on Sunday in compliance with a government order for the country's 6 million residents to stay in their homes.

7 injured when boat catches fire

BOSTON (AP) — Officials say at seven people are being treated for injuries after a boat caught fire at a dock in Boston.

Fire Department spokesman Steve MacDonald said the 38-foot boat had just finished fueling at a dock in the city's Charlestown neighborhood when it burst into flames Sunday evening.

MacDonald said one person on the boat suffered burns to both legs. He didn't know the nature of the other injuries, or the ages or genders of those involved. The injuries are believed to be non-life-threatening.

MacDonald said attendants working at the fuel pumps used a fire extinguisher to control the blaze until firefighters arrived and put it out.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

NASA explorer arrives at Mars

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA's Maven spacecraft arrived at Mars late Sunday after a 442 million-mile journey that began nearly a year ago.

The robotic explorer fired its brakes and successfully slipped into orbit around the red planet, officials confirmed. "This is such an incredible night," said John Grunsfeld, NASA's chief for science missions.

Now the real work begins for the \$671 million mission, the first dedicated to studying Mars' upper atmosphere.

Flight controllers in Colorado will spend the next six weeks adjusting Maven's altitude and checking its science instruments. Then Maven will start probing the upper atmosphere of Mars. The spacecraft will conduct its observations from orbit; it's not meant to land.

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